Falcon Pac

March/April 1982

Affirmation:

United Methodists for Gay and Lesbian Concerns

NATIONAL MEETING APRIL 16-18

FRIDAY EVENING CELEBRATION

The Minneapolis meeting will open Friday evening with a musical/dramatic event: "Celebrating our Struggle." Featured in the event will be: Up and Over, a feminist theatre troupe, and Tom Wilson, gay singer/songwriter. Admission to this event is also open to the lesbian/gay community of Minneapolis. The event will begin at 7:30 PM.

A get-acquainted time will follow with the opportunity to meet in men's and women's groups. Here we will be able to share our own struggles and joys as they have been illuminated by the performances of Tom Wilson and Up and Over.

This promises to be an exhilirating and revealing opening to Affirmation's national meeting. It will provide the foundation for our work together through the weekend.

SATURDAY/SUNDAY SESSIONS

Saturday and Sunday will be devoted to reporting on Affirmation's activities and planning the ongoing life of the group.

Saturday's session will include: reports from local groups, the Coordinating Committee, and the Organizational Style/Nominations Committee. Central in Saturday's discussions will be the formulating of the five locally-based task forces which were approved at the San Francisco meeting: 1) Communication, 2) National Church, 3) Networking, 4) Education, 5) Fundraising and Finances. We will be outlining strategies and tasks in each arena for the next six months and assigning local groups responsibility for a particular task force. Specific proposals for Affirmation's activities in the months ahead will be incorporated into discussions and decisions about the task forces. We will also be engaging the issues of inclusiveness in the areas of race, sex, age, class, and geography in all arenas of Affirmation's life.

A large block of free time will be available late Saturday afternoon and early evening. This will allow participants a chance to deal with personal issues/support on a one-to-one or small group basis, explore Minneapolis, or make special dinner plans.

Sunday morning's session will focus on two major agenda items: approval of nominations for the Coordinating Committee and deciding a budget/fundraising package. We will also wrap up business which was not completed at other points in the weekend. The Sunday morning session will close with a celebration of worship sending each other back to our local communities and into the journey ahead of us.

LOGISTICS

A registration form is included on page 3 of this newsletter. Please fill it out immediately if you will be attending the April 16-18 meeting. You should mail it to Allen McCormack (address on form).

Participants are asked to contribute $20.00 to cover the expenses of the meeting. Anyone who is unable to pay the full $20.00 is still encouraged to attend. The fee includes housing, admission to the Friday evening performances, and light lunches on Saturday and Sunday. Housing will be provided at various sites close to the meeting place. If you can bring a sleeping bag, please indicate that on the registration form. If you require a bed to sleep on, indicate that and any dietary needs or other special considerations on the form.

Transportation will be provided from the airport. Indicate your arrival time, airline, and flight number on the form.

(continued on page 2)

MINNEAPOLIS MEETING (continued)

If no one is waiting for you upon your arrival at the airport, call [redacted]. If you are driving or arriving by another means than flying, contact Allen (previous number) for directions to the meeting site, or to arrange transportation from elsewhere.

PARTICIPATION IS EXPECTED FOR THE ENTIRE WEEKEND. In order to register and be present for the Friday evening event you need to arrive at the airport no later than 6:00 PM Friday. To allow for full participation in Sunday's session and your travel to the airport you should schedule your return flight no earlier than 3:00 PM Sunday.

TRAVEL POOL

As announced in the February newsletter, participants will have the opportunity of being part of a travel pool for the Minneapolis meeting. This is the result of our agreement to enable persons to attend national meetings who have to travel a great distance and to share that cost of travel more equitably.

All who agree to join in the travel pool will add together the cost of their travel and then divide that cost equally among all pool participants. The travel pool is open to everyone, whether traveling by plane, bus, or car.

This is a first-time experiment. The success of the travel pool depends upon the participation of people are traveling long distances and also those who travel a relatively shorter distance. You can indicate your willingness to join the pool by checking the box on the registration form before sending it in.

Interdenominational Lesbian/Gay Conference

Representatives of various lesbian and gay organizations will gather in Washington, D.C. on May 7 - 9 under the theme: "Toward an American Lesbian/Gay Movement." The conference is foreseen as an opportunity for communication, networking, and coalition-building between the lesbian/gay denominational caucuses. and groups. The weekend will provide a witness to the presence and strength of the Christian faith among lesbian/gay people.

In May 1979 the Strategy Conference on Homophobia in the Churches was convened by representatives of sixteen denominational caucuses. That event addressed the roots of homophobia within the church and society and outlined strategies for educating denominational members about the situations and aspirations of lesbian/gay Christians.

The 1982 conference builds upon the earlier experience and unfolds in the context of the changing American scene of the past three years. The agenda envisioned by the Steering Committee is lengthy and will be narrowed by the concerns and wisdom brought to the conference by the participants.

Also planned as part of the conference weekend is a rally to be held on Saturday evening at a local church in D.C. Several prominent lesbian/gay religious leaders have been invited to speak at the rally, which is open to the lesbian/gay community and the general public. The rally will serve as a sign of the diversity and solidarity within the lesbian/gay Christian movement.

Each participating organization is being invited to send 2-6 representatives to the Conference. Groups which have indicated a willingness to participate at this time include: Affirmation, Brethren/Mennonite Council for Gay Concerns, Dignity, Friends for Lesbian/Gay Concerns, Integrity, Pentecostal Coalition for Human Rights, and UFMCC, among others. In addition lesbian/gay Jewish organizations have been invited as observers.

Affirmation will allot time during the Minneapolis meeting to discuss our role in this conference and to designate Affirmation's representatives. Any comments or suggestions should be directed to one of the Coordinating Committee members.

Local Groups Report

Affirmation welcomes a new group in the Pacific and Southwest Conference. The first meeting of the group was held on January 22 with more than 20 persons attending. A regular meeting time has been established - the third Saturday of each month, in the Los Angeles area.

The monthly meetings are an occasion for program, fellowship, and sharing for the 35 persons who relate to the group. Initial concerns for the group have been formulating resolutions for the Annual Conference and projecting a year's calendar. Contact with Affirmation: Pacific and Southwest can be made by writing to: [redacted] Los Angeles, CA [redacted].

Mid-Atlantic Affirmation has just completed the first stage of reorganization. The basis of the new operational model is four committees or work areas: Group Life; Outreach; Church Impact; and Education. All local members are encouraged to participate in at least one committee in order to diffuse responsibilities and work and also to utilize the talents of a larger constituency. The second stage which remains is to locate responsibility and accountability for strategy coordination and day-to-day activities in the group's life.

Followup work with the Baltimore Conference workshop of last fall continues. The group meets regularly on the first and third Sundays of each month. More information can be obtained by writing: [redacted], Washington, DC. [redacted].

Affirmation:Nebraska is participating in an interdenominational worshipping community, The Community of Grace in Lincoln. The community gathers each Sunday evening for fellowship, sharing, and worship. The Community of Grace has been invited to a Nebraska Conference workshop "Counseling Homosexual Persons and Their Families" April 16-17.

Local folks are supporting an amendment to the Lincoln city charter which would add "sexual orientation" to the list of groups of persons protected from discrimination in housing and employment. Voting will occur on May 11th.

Contact with the Community of Grace can be carried out by writing: [redacted], Lincoln, NE [redacted].

- -

REGISTRATION FOR NATIONAL AFFIRMATION MEETING - APRIL 16-18

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

_____

Airline _____ Flight # _____ Arrival time _____

_____ I can bring a sleeping bag/ bed roll.

_____ I wish to participate in the travel pool. Estimate of travel cost _____

List any special considerations for the planners (sleeping, diet, etc.):

_____

_____ Enclosed is my registration fee of $20.00 (please make checks payable to: Morris Floyd, and designate for Minneapolis meeting registration.

RETURN THIS TO: Allen McCormack, [redacted], Minneapolis, MN [redacted]

PLEASE COMPLETE AND MAIL THIS FORM IMMEDIATELY IF YOU WILL BE PRESENT AT THE MEETING IN ORDER TO AID THE WORK OF THE PLANNERS.

LOCAL GROUPS REPORT (continued)

Affirmation:Chicago continues to gather twice a month. The second Sunday of each month is set aside for a social event. The group meets on the fourth Tuesday of each month for worship and program. The address for the group is: [redacted], Evanston, IL [redacted].

New England Affirmation was officially organized last fall. One of the first acts of the new group was to sponsor letters which were sent to Annual Conference Boards of Ministry. The letters were signed by ordination candidates and their supporters and declared that questions about "sexual preference" were inappropriate in a Board interview relating to qualification for ordained ministry. Ordination candidates who signed the letters indicated they would refuse to answer such questions.

On April 21, the group will host a "Workshop on Institutional Homophobia" at Boston University School of Theology. New England Affirmation meets twice a month and can be contacted at: [redacted], [redacted] Boston, MA [redacted].

IF YOU CANNOT MAKE IT TO MINNEAPOLIS:

Plan ahead to come to the fall meeting, September 17-19 in Boston, MA.

ALSO: Would you send a contribution to help defray the cost of the Minneapolis meeting and the ongoing work of Affirmation? After this meeting you will be informed of our projected budget and needed income for the next year. In the meantime we have outstanding bills which need to be paid. Any contribution would be appreciated and would sustain our existence as as alternative community within the United Methodist Church. Contributions are tax-deductible. Send to [redacted], Evanston, IL [redacted].

AFFIRMATION CONTACTS

Mark Bowman
[redacted]
Washington, D.C. [redacted]
[redacted]

Allen McCormack
[redacted]
Minneapolis, MN [redacted]
[redacted]

Michael Collins
[redacted]
New York, NY [redacted]
[redacted]

Leanne Tigert
[redacted]
Cambridge, MA [redacted]

Mary Gaddis
[redacted]
Holy City, CA [redacted]

Michael Troyer
[redacted]
Evanston, IL [redacted]
[redacted]